



### **Delta Counties Coalition**

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County

*"Working together on water and Delta issues"*

April 20, 2010

The Honorable Denise Moreno Ducheny  
Chair, Senate Budget & Fiscal Review  
California State Senate  
State Capitol Room 5019  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Bob Blumenfield  
Chair, Assembly Budget  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Joe Simitian  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2  
California State Senate  
State Capitol Room 2080  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Ira Ruskin  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol Room 3123  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### **RE: Funding for 2009 Delta Legislation Implementation**

Dear Chairpersons Ducheny, Blumenfield, Simitian, and Ruskin,

We are writing to request funding to support local implementation of the 2009 Delta legislation.

As you heard during the March 9<sup>th</sup> Joint Hearing of the above-referenced committees you chair, various state and federal entities described what must be done in the coming months and years to implement the 2009 Delta legislation.

What was not discussed at that hearing is that the Delta Counties not only share similar responsibilities, but also now have many other responsibilities that are expected to link to or coordinate with various other aspects of the Delta legislation. These responsibilities have been added in an environment where local budgets are already inadequate for protecting the health, safety and welfare of the residents within our jurisdictions.

The Delta Counties believe our full participation in the Delta Protection Commission (DPC) is essential to addressing the interests and needs of the Delta. The DPC is the only state institution that ensures the level of local representation we deem critical to the work of the Delta Stewardship Council (DSC). The DPC also provides a forum on Delta issues that is more accessible to our constituents than the forum provided by the Delta Stewardship Council. Additional DPC involvement in Delta issues, including analysis of Bay-Delta Conservation Plan

proposals, will help the state by both providing independent analysis of Delta proposals and engaging stakeholders in developing appropriate mitigation measures and other compensation mechanisms related to Delta solutions.

In order to accomplish these important goals, however, there needs to be a significant increase in funding to the DPC. We recognize the FY 2010/11 budget increased the DPC budget by \$2 million, in large part to complete the Delta Economic Sustainability Plan by July 1, 2011. This funding level must be increased in FY 2010/11 because the 2009 Delta legislation has added new responsibilities onto the DPC that go far beyond the Economic Sustainability Plan or the DPC's ongoing responsibility for coordinating local General Plans in the Delta primary zone. The DPC's added responsibilities include:

- Developing a funding strategy to implement the Economic Sustainability Plan and provide recommendations to the legislature and federal agencies on the Delta Investment Fund (PRC §29778.5).
- Reviewing and commenting to the DSC on significant projects proposed within the scope of the Delta Plan (PRC §29773).
  - First up will be the need to comment on the draft Bay-Delta Conservation Plan (BDCP) and its draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement. To properly assess potential impacts on the Primary & Secondary Zones of the Delta, the DPC will need independent access to consultants (e.g.; economists, hydrologists, and biologists) to address the BDCP proposals.
- Recommending to the DSC a proposal to protect, enhance and sustain the unique cultural, historical, recreational, agricultural and economic values of the Delta as an evolving plan, in a manner consistent with the coequal goals (PRC §85301) .
- Reviewing and commenting to the Delta Conservancy's Strategic Plan (PRC § 32376).
- Updating of the Resource Management Plan to be consistent with the Delta Plan.

As a starting point for the budget discussion, we would like to propose the following:

- ✓ Make all DPC "(FTE)" staff positions permanent. In addition, grant the DPC's original budget request of nine new permanent FTEs and add three additional permanent FTEs (professional positions) to staff the new committees established by the DPC to cover both their additional responsibilities and the DPC Chair's position on the DSC. We also urge adding several more administrative staff positions to the DPC, given the expanded responsibilities and the lack of current administrative support. We note that additional funding should be provided to elevate certain DPC positions to a higher classification to put them on par with DSC staffing.
- ✓ Consultant costs for FY 2010/11 are proposed in order to complete the Economic Sustainability Plan. In FY 2010/11 "operating expenses and equipment" for DPC is funded at \$1.7 M, which is an increase \$1.42M compared to FY 2009/10. Given the

range of responsibilities now entrusted to the DPC, the FY 2010/11 funding level for operating expenses and equipment should be increased by \$500,000 to fund consultants to review BDCP studies, draft environmental documents, and to review findings in the Delta Plan that impact resources in the primary zone and secondary zone. This will provide funding capacity for consultants to assist the DPC and recognizes that DPC's responsibilities extend far into the future if the implementation of the Delta Plan is to be successful.

Given the significant role the Delta Counties must play in the execution of the actions that are contemplated in the Delta legislation, and because of the Delta Plan's critical importance to the communities of the Delta, it is very important that there is sufficient funding to the Delta Protection Commission to accomplish the tasks described above.

Sincerely,



Mary Nejedly Piepho  
Supervisor, Contra Costa County



Don Nottoli  
Supervisor, Sacramento County



Larry Ruhstaller  
Supervisor, San Joaquin County



Michael J. Reagan  
Supervisor, Solano County



Mike McGowan  
Supervisor, Yolo County